



Elektro Großhandels Union

SD-WAN for wholesale company

Client Success Story





THE PATH TO EASIER GROWTH AND NETWORK STABILITY RUNS THROUGH SD-WAN

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Every company wants to grow. But growth and expansion come at a cost, and you must plan for and provision new IT infrastructure for every new location. Adding a branch to an existing network puts any IT team to the test, especially if you have limited human and financial resources. With the right tools, technologies, and partners, you can maximize what you have.

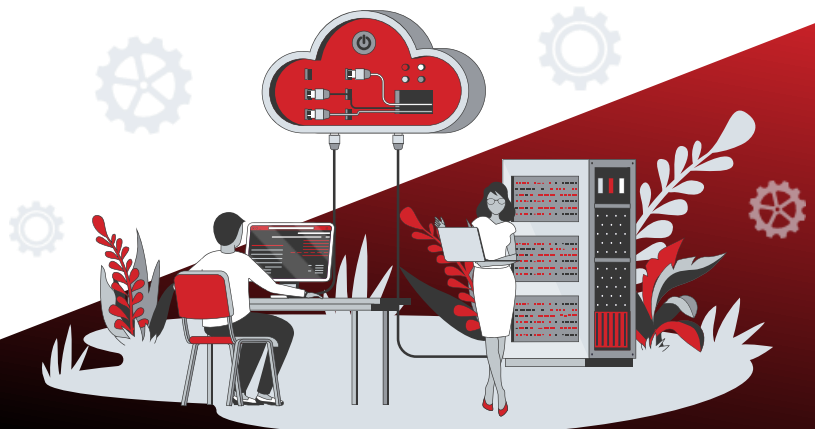
That's what we discovered at EGU when we added a new branch in a new city. We're a German distributor of electrical components for the construction industry. For years, we relied on VPN technology to connect our offices and distribution centers across the country, but in 2021, we upgraded our infrastructure to facilitate more network stability and easier growth.

It Began with an Eye-Opening Meeting

I am a member of team of ten IT professionals serving 500 employees in 38 facilities across Germany. We handle IT infrastructure, security, and business applications, including Active Directory and group policies, endpoint management, Windows Server management, and our Microsoft 365 deployment.

Our VPN infrastructure wasn't stable or performant. We were dealing with signal loss and constant disconnections, and that was only the tip of the iceberg. Our network was also holding us back. We couldn't adopt modern technologies like remote management, software deployments, and updates at our branches because we needed more bandwidth and couldn't secure our endpoints.

We looked at various upgrade paths, primarily faster DSL. During our search, a colleague referred us to a contact from Riedel Networks. We set up a meeting to discuss high-speed DSL solutions, which Riedel was known for. However, during that meeting, Riedel reps showed us their entire portfolio of products, including Cisco SD-WAN and Cisco Meraki. It was eye-opening—we already knew about these technologies, but had never considered them to replace our VPN. That meeting led to a proof of concept in March 2021.



We started with a pilot at a single branch. Riedel supplied a central appliance and a branch appliance. We set up a test environment and met with Riedel on a regular basis to share and analyze the results. After months of testing, we started rolling out Cisco SD-WAN and Meraki across our operations. By Christmas, we had migrated all of our existing branches to our new infrastructure.

Efficient Project Managers Got Us Up and Running

Riedel helped our team get up and running with Cisco Meraki and its management platform. We learned how to view and analyze network performance and usage using the Cisco Cloud Networking Dashboard.

Although Riedel manages our infrastructure, we have full visibility into our network and can alert them to emerging issues. We can also make informed change requests. If network performance is suffering, an appliance has failed, or a branch needs more bandwidth, we can pinpoint the bottleneck or issue and ask Riedel to remedy it (if they haven't already).

Since the rollout, we haven't experienced any disconnected branches, a significant improvement over our old infrastructure. In the past, individual branches would go offline for hours at a time. On some occasions, entire regions would be inaccessible, and we would have to wait for our provider to repair and re-establish the connection. We don't have that problem with Cisco SD-WAN. If a network segment goes offline, Riedel routes traffic to our LTE backup while they repair the connection. Our high-availability infrastructure is stable, reliable, and guaranteed to work 99.9% of the time. It is years ahead of our VPN.

Riedel's project managers were stellar. Migrating 38 branches was quite the challenge for our small team, and Riedel helped us every step of the way. They have a great team, which is one of the reasons we chose to work with them. They have expert knowledge of Cisco SD-WAN and Meraki and took the time to understand our business needs.

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Some vendors sell technology. Others show you a solution.

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Some vendors sell you technology, but Riedel gave us a solution. Their engineers optimized our network to reflect our business goals and practices, installed the needed hardware and software, and handed the keys to my team. EGU handles day-to-day network management, and Riedel steps in when something goes wrong, or it's time for an update. It's a pleasure dealing with such skilled professionals.

The Next Steps: Cisco Umbrella and Anyconnect

Upon deploying our new network, we also rolled out Cisco Umbrella as our cloud security solution. It's incredibly transparent to us, yet our end users don't even notice it.



There's no hardware to install, and it combines DNS-layer security with Cisco Advanced Malware Protection (AMP) and machine learning to block unsafe destinations and malware requests before they hit our network.

Cisco Umbrella delivers flexible, cloud-based security without overtaxing our IT team. Although it provides a high level of automation, including automated deployments, monitoring, and testing scripts, we have full access to security logs. We can manually inspect traffic, block incoming and outgoing communications, and enforce consistent rules as the need arises. Cisco Umbrella is the last word in secure access service edge (SASE) technology, and it integrates seamlessly with Cisco SD-WAN and Meraki.

In October 2022, we also launched a Cisco AnyConnect pilot project to provide secure endpoint access for our new Office 365 users. We are still in the testing phase and expect to roll it out company-wide once we complete our Office 365 project.

One of the benefits of combining Cisco solutions is that they work well together. Instead of trying to integrate several vendors' products and dealing with messy APIs and compatibility issues, we can view and configure our IT infrastructure from a single pane of glass using a few clicks and easy-to-understand dashboards. There's also a clear division of labor. We manage Cisco Umbrella and AnyConnect internally, while Riedel handles our SD-WAN, DSL connectivity, and LTE backup.

Riedel Helps EGU Move Faster

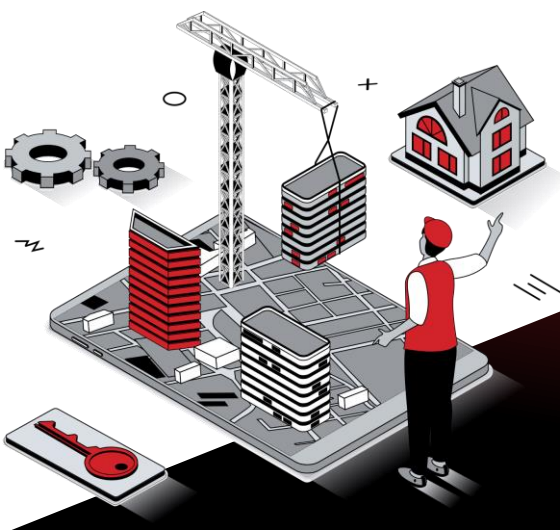
Our partnership with Riedel Networks allows EGU to move faster. When we opened our most recent branch, Riedel connected it to our existing infrastructure and SD-WAN within two weeks. We had already established the default rules and policies so we could start right away, which was great for the business. And as we continue to grow, we can easily replicate this process, extending our SD-WAN by adding Meraki switches at new branches and working with Riedel to configure and secure each location. We have clear policies and procedures in place and can deploy infrastructure at a push of a button.

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With clear policies and procedures in place, you can deploy new infrastructure at a push of a button.

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Using Cisco technology, Riedel has helped us eliminate complexity, assign roles to appropriate internal and external resources, and maximize the effectiveness of our IT team. Together, we achieved our milestones and transformed EGU's network. The migration from our VPN to Cisco SD-WAN was a resounding success and a pleasure for my team, and I'm proud of everything we've accomplished with Riedel. Technology can be frustrating, but Riedel was the perfect partner to help us upgrade our infrastructure to ensure our future growth.



Get in Touch

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About RIEDEL Networks

RIEDEL Networks is a privately held, global network provider focused on tailor-made networks. We are listed in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Network Services, Global, as a niche provider specializing in mid-market international enterprises and the media and events sector. With our own global backbone, we help companies be connected worldwide. Our services include internet connectivity, MPLS, SD-WAN, SASE, Cloud Connect and much more. Our customers come from a variety of industries and value quality, security and reliability. RIEDEL Networks is a 100% company of the RIEDEL Communications Group in Wuppertal, Germany, and is fully privately owned by Thomas Riedel.